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STATE FOR NEA/ELA  
LABOR FOR ILAB

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: NILE DELTA TOWN LARGELY CALM APRIL 8-9; PM  
"REWARDS" WORKERS

REF: A. CAIRO 715  
[1](#)B. CAIRO 697

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Even after the parade of Egyptian cabinet ministers and attendant security had long returned to Cairo, the streets of Mehalla el Kubra remained relatively calm the evening of April 8 and early April 9. Earlier on April 8, Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif joined the three ministers of Manpower, Investment, and Social Solidarity for meetings with worker representatives at the Ghazl el Mehalla textile factory. In addition to delivering a reward for their decision not to pursue a planned strike (ref A), the visits attempted to draw a line between the workers' grievances and the violence that had erupted in the streets, which the PM ascribed to sabotage by "foreign parties." Enhancing its previously reported inducements, the GOE said it will compensate the Ghazl el Mehalla workers with a 30-day bonus, and provide all Egyptian textile workers with a 15-day bonus.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The numbers of those killed or injured during the violence of April 6-7 have yet to be confirmed, as have reports regarding the death of a little girl due to exposure to tear gas. However, several press reports, quoting security and hospital sources, have confirmed the death of a 15-year-old boy, Ahmad Ali Mabrouk Hamada. According to the reports, Hamada died after being shot by police during clashes on April 7. The hospital source quoted in the reports also said that 96 had been injured, seven critically. Many involved in the clashes remain detained in police custody; however, the precise number is not known.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Some local commentators have remarked that the GOE's inducements to Mehalla workers, and statements ascribing the violence to "foreign parties" and "saboteurs," are shallow attempts to deflect attention from the palpable anger displayed by ordinary citizens beset by poverty and rising prices. Workers and labor activists are quick to point out that the GOE has made many promises before to address their long-term grievances over wage stagnation, the rising cost of living, and fears of privatization, but with little result. The 30-day bonuses promised to the Mehalla workers might equal approximately USD 30 to 90 dollars per worker.  
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